

# STUDIO MUSEUM HARLEM

## **For Immediate Release**

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## ***Quid Pro Quo:***

***Rashawn Griffin, Karyn Olivier and Clifford Owens***

## **2005-06 Artists-in-Residence**

On view: July 19 through October 22, 2006



Clockwise from left: Rashawn Griffin, Karyn Olivier and Clifford Owens. Photo: Ray Llanos

**NEW YORK, NY June 21, 2006** – The Studio Museum in Harlem proudly presents *Quid Pro Quo: Rashawn Griffin, Karyn Olivier and Clifford Owens*, an exhibition of art works by the 2005-06 Artists-in-Residence. Organized by Associate Curator Christine Y. Kim, *Quid Pro Quo* is the culmination of a year's worth of creative growth and continuous artistic production. With thirty works of art in drawing, sculpture, photography, video and performance, this exhibition will be on view from July 19 to October 22, 2006.

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As the exhibition title suggests, the art of Griffin, Olivier and Owens is grounded in the *quid pro quo* of everyday life, investigating material balance, social exchange and larger issues of governance, control and power. Through ideas associated with child's play, social anxiety and artist-audience tension, literal elements, such as jungle gyms, body lotion and blue jeans, are not only abstracted, but they are converted and reincarnated into new objects with altered forms, functions and processes.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### Rashawn Griffin

Born 1980, Los Angeles, CA  
Lives and works in New York, NY

#### Education

2005 MFA, Yale University, New Haven, CT  
2002 BFA, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD

**Rashawn Griffin's** work hovers between the public and the private, the ambiguous and the obvious, and straddles the gap between interacting and simply viewing. Riffing on early West Coast assemblage, minimal and post-minimal practices and color field painting, Griffin creates paintings, sculptures and multimedia collages that explore the traits and natures of materials and space. Constructed wooden frames covered with stretched fabric, which Griffin refers to as "banners" or "flags", hang from the ceiling to address the viewer architecturally and officially, mirroring the role of banners and flags displayed in public spaces. Despite the fact that the banners are meant to engage the viewer authoritatively, they are abstract and often assembled with personal materials that encourage interpretation, such a denim jeans and bed sheets from his childhood. Griffin employs ambiguity and double entendre to create works that are recognizable, yet paradoxical by using familiar elements in a foreign context.

### Karyn Olivier

Born 1968, Port of Spain, Trinidad  
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

#### Education

2001 MFA, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI  
1989 BA, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH

**Karyn Olivier** focuses on site-specific and site-generated installations that engage objects and space through architectural alterations and interventions. With a critical interest in the psychology of viewing and the psychology of space, Olivier's practice entices viewers into exiting their comfort zones in order to experience artful, meticulously designed structures. Olivier's work questions the natures of privacy and intimacy, and the very meaning of architecture. Highly conceptual and often confessional, her practice brings together the theoretical, the uncertain, and the personal by presenting the viewer with a fictional experience that challenges standards of reality and collapses the distinction between architecture and sculpture.

### Clifford Owens

Born 1971, Baltimore, MD  
Lives and works in Long Island City, NY

#### Education

2000 MFA, Mason Gross School of Visual Arts, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ  
1998 BFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County, MD

With a body of work that encompasses live action, video, photography, installation and objects, **Clifford Owens** investigates the nature of performance and human interaction. Probing multiple layers of personal and social psychology, Owens presents himself to the viewer with unabashed honesty, engaging the public in a study of how

individuals are connected and how environment stimulates interaction. Often using his body as a primary medium, Owens' public interventions engage the viewer in cat-and-mouse scenarios and invite them to invert the power structure that typically does not allow the viewer to assert control over the art or artist. Owens' practice questions whether or not art exists in a vacuum, suggesting that perhaps art is a dialogue between presenter and viewer.

**The *Artists-in-Residence* Program is made possible by generous support from: Nimoy Foundation, Elaine Dannheisser Foundation, The Greenwall Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, Helena Rubinstein Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Dedalus Foundation and an endowment funded by the Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Trust and by the Andrea Frank Foundation.**

## **EDUCATION & PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

In conjunction with *Quid Pro Quo*, The Studio Museum in Harlem's Department of Education and Public Programs offers a range of programs, activities and events that will incorporate artists, scholars, and critics into thought-provoking discussions on a wide variety of issues central to the works on view in the exhibition. For more information on public programs, please visit [www.studiomuseum.org](http://www.studiomuseum.org), or call 212-864-4500 (ext. 264).

## **ABOUT THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM**

The Studio Museum in Harlem is a contemporary art museum that focuses on the work of artists of African descent locally, nationally and globally, as well as work that has been inspired and influenced by African-American culture, through its exhibitions, Artists-in-Residence program, education and public programming, permanent collection, archival and research facilities.

The Studio Museum in Harlem is committed to serving as a unique resource in its local community and in national and international arenas by making art works and exhibitions concrete and personal for each viewer and providing a context within which to address the contemporary and historical issues presented through art created by artists of African descent.

Since opening in a rented loft at Fifth Avenue and 125th Street in 1968, The Studio Museum has earned recognition for its catalytic role in promoting the works of artists of African descent. The Museum's Artists-In-Residence program has supported over 90 graduates who have gone on to establish highly regarded careers. A wide variety of Education and Public Programs have brought the African American experience alive for the public by means of lectures, dialogues, panel discussions, and performances, as well as interpretive programs both on-site and off-site for students and teachers. The Exhibitions program has also expanded the scope of art historical literature through the production of scholarly catalogues, brochures and pamphlets.

The Studio Museum's Permanent Collection contains over 1,600 works, including drawings, pastels, prints, photographs, mixed media works, and installations. It is comprised of works created by artists during their residency, as well as pieces given to the Museum to create an art historical framework for artists of African descent. Featured in the collection are Terry Adkins, Romare Bearden, Skunder Boghossian, Robert Colescott, Melvin Edwards, Richard Hunt, Hector Hyppolite, Serge Jolimeau, Lois Mailou Jones, Jacob Lawrence, Norman Lewis, Philome Obin, Betye Saar, Nari Ward, and Hale Woodruff among others. The Museum also is the custodian of an extensive archive of the work of photographer James VanDerZee, the quintessential chronicler of the Harlem community from 1906 to 1984.

Operation of the Studio Museum in Harlem is supported with public funds provided by The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation through the office of Sen. David A. Paterson. Major funding is also provided by The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation and The Carnegie Corporation of New York, with additional support from The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, JPMorgan Chase, LEF Foundation, The Scherman Foundation, Inc., Goldman, Sachs & Co., Credit Suisse First Boston, The New York Times Company Foundation, American Express Company, Altria Group Inc., New York Stock Exchange Foundation, Pfizer, Inc., The Norman and Rosita Winston Foundation, Inc., The Cowles Charitable Trust, Lord & Taylor, Pierre and Maria-Gaetana Matisse Foundation, The Moody's Foundation, Morgan Stanley and The Young & Rubicam Foundation.

## **ADDRESS**

The Studio Museum in Harlem is located at 144 West 125th Street, between Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard and Lenox Avenue. Subway: A, B, C, D, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 to 125th Street. Bus: M-2, M-7, M-10, M-100, M-101, M-102 or BX-15.



Photo: Ray Llanos

**ADMISSION**

Suggested donation: \$7 for adults, \$3 for students (with valid id) and seniors. Free for children 12 and under. The first Saturday of every month is free for everyone.

**HOURS**

The museum is open Wednesday through Friday, and Sunday from 12 – 6, and from 10 – 6 on Saturdays. The Museum is closed on Monday, Tuesday and major holidays.

Phone: 212 864 4500/ fax: 212 864- 4800/ Web site: [www.studiomuseum.org](http://www.studiomuseum.org).

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